

p.39

Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia.
 Meeting with the Cetanmax Band or Tribe of Indians at their reserve near
 Old Hazelton on Wednesday, April 21st, 1915.

Chairman addresses the assembled Indians as to the scope and purpose of
 the Commission.

Edward Spouk:

I am very glad to see you all here to-day right in our Cetanmax
 Reserve. We were born right here and God gave us this little place
 and I feel happy because I see you gentlemen here. Seven years ago
 we sent a petition right down to Ottawa - our petition meant that
 we were asking from the Government to give us our land back and
 also all our hunting grounds and all our fishing camps, and we want
 to hold these for our own use - we want to hold it just the same
 as a white man holds his land and we want to hold our land in the
 same way, and we have been asking the Government to get rid of the
 "Indian Act" for us - this is what we have been asking the Government
 for the past seven years.

(Commissioner Carmichael asks the Chief of Hazelton No. 1 Reserve
 if he knows that there are 2,704 acres on a reserve and how many people
 live there)

Chief:

What is the reason you are asking me all these questions - what I want
 to get is my own land back again... We want to get our own land back,
 that is all.

Commissioner Carmichael:

p.40

There is no use in this Commission, which is a very important Commission
 ... (etc.) ... the ~~Indians~~ only way we have been able to help the Indians
 in these Reserves is where they have given us the information we want
 to get and in many cases reserves will be added to. But it is quite
 impossible for us, outside the help of the Indian Agent, to get
 information unless the Indians want to give it to us... It is no
 use for you to say that you want all the land back because we have
 nothing to do with that matter at all. As far as we are concerned,
 we are here to listen to you and if you don't want to speak to us,
 well, we have done our duty in coming to see you. If you have made
 up your mind that you are not going to answer any of our questions,
 then we have nothing more to do but say Good Bye and go away, and we
 won't come back ... if you have made up your mind not to answer the
 questions, that is your funeral and not ours.

Chief:

My representative will answer you questions - His name is Mr. Holland,
 (an Indian).

Holland:

The Indians say they would like to put it to a vote as to whether
 or not they will answer the questions.

Comm'r Carmichael to the Commission:

(suggests a ten minute adjournment so that the Indians present can vote:)
 " ... as to whether they are willing to answer the questions put by the
 Commission, so that the responsibility for refusing to answer would
 remain entirely with the members of Reserve No.1 of the Hazelton Band. "

p.41 Holland:

You heard what the Chief said a while ago - We don't want no Reserve at all - we want to get our own land back. You want to ask us questions which are not in our petition at all. We did not sign our petition for a reserve at all - we signed it for our own lands. The Reservation is not so good for us at all - it is no use for us. They are fenced all around so we can't do any business outside the reserves. We are just tied up in the Reservation, and that is the reason we signed our petition that we don't want any more reserves for the whole of the Skeena Nation. We sent a couple of gentlemen down to Ottawa and we sent the petition with those gentlemen. Our petition is right in Ottawa and the ~~the~~ other one has gone to the King. We want to get our own land back and we want to hold it for our own use. We would like to do just the same as a free man so that no one is going to watch us all the time just like we are watched when we are in a reserve - We cannot be helped in our reserve at all. It is the wish here that we get the petition settled. I guess all you gentlemen misunderstand our petition - you think we sent our petition in for a reserve, but that is not right. We did not sign our petition for that at all. Where we are now it is just the same as if we were being tightened all the time with fences all around us; that is the reason we sent our petition.

Comm'r Carmichael:

p.42

We have heard your explanation regarding the petition - we have told all the Indians who have sent in petitions of that kind that this Commission has no power to deal with those petitions and we would ~~be~~ be deceiving the Indians if we let them think that we had that power; but I understand that Indians, after consultation, refuse to answer the questions which we require in order that we may carry out the powers which we have - they don't wish to answer the questions, is that correct?

Holland:

We could give you all kinds of answers if we made our petition that way, but we did not make our petition for reservations at all. The reservation is no good for us - it is no good for white men, it is no good for anyone. We cannot sell it or do anything and that is the reason we won't give you an answer.

Chairman:

We quite understand the view that you take - We think, though, that you have made a great ~~mistake~~ mistake, because if we were in a position to give the Indians here more reserves that would not hurt ~~them~~ them in the claim that the Indians are making - If we gave them an additional 1,000 acres for their reserve it would not hurt them in still holding to the claim that they have. We also notice that the Chief said "he wanted the Indian Act to be done away with" - This statement surprises us, because the Indian Act protects the Indians in all their rights and privileges, and the Dominion Government, who are the trustees for the Indians, passed that Act for the very purpose of protecting them and benefitting them; however, we are glad to have met you hereto-day...(etc. etc.)

Holland:

We are not mistaken when we ask for our own - we are born citizens in this country - we were born in this place - we were born here and we own this land and we want to get it back.

April 21st, 1915 (cont.) Getenmax Band

Chairman:

p.43

We are not discussing the fact that you own this land; only they are two different matters altogether. / If we were to give you an additional 1,000 acres of land, your right to this question is still open and you could still go ahead and make your claim without fear of hindrance.

This concluded the meeting.